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ABSTRACT

This report focuses on two experienced high school English teachers and the factors that shaped their literature instruction, especially graduate work emphasizing theories and approaches described as "the new literacy" (Willinsky, 1990). Although other studies have focused on the impact of undergraduate and masters program on preservice or early career English teachers, little is known about programmatic impact of advanced graduate study on the practice of experienced English teachers. Of particular interest were the questions and tensions these teachers struggled with after graduating from progressive programs in English Education and returning to high school classrooms. Analysis of these tensions revealed critical intersections between the personal and public dimensions of their classroom practices. Their purposes for teaching literature and their practices were suffused with ethical, historical, and theoretical considerations for the power of literature and teaching to change lives. Even the physical arrangements of their classrooms and the ways in which they interacted with their students spoke of deeply personal convictions about the act of learning as well as theoretical positions. This paper examines the relationships among theory, identity, and practice as it was represented in the voices and pedagogy of two experienced English teachers in two very different schools and regions of the country. Findings suggest that disciplinary knowledge and teaching practices are socially constructed in interactions among colleagues, students, and the settings in which they teach. Contains 56 references. Appendixes contain interview questions and a literature selection protocol. (NKA)

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THEORY, IDENTITY, AND PRACTICE: A STUDY OF TWO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS' LITERATURE INSTRUCTION

JANE AGEE

This report focuses on two experienced high school English teachers and the factors that shaped their literature instruction, especially graduate work emphasizing theories and approaches described as "the new literacy" (Willinsky, 1990). Although other studies have focused on the impact of undergraduate and masters programs on preservice or early career English teachers (e.g., Agee, 1998, 1997; Grossman, 1990; Vinz, 1996), we know little about programmatic impact of advanced graduate study on the practice of experienced English teachers.

I was particularly interested in the questions or tensions these teachers struggled with after graduating from progressive programs in English Education and returning to high school classrooms. Analysis of these tensions revealed critical intersections between the personal and public dimensions of their classroom practices. Their purposes for teaching literature and their practices were suffused with ethical, historical, and theoretical considerations for the power of literature and teaching to change lives. Even the physical arrangements of their classrooms and the ways in which these teachers interacted with their students spoke of deeply personal convictions about the act of learning as well as theoretical positions. This paper examines the relationships among theory, identity, and practice as it was represented in the voices and pedagogy of two experienced English teachers in two very different schools and regions of the country.

The findings suggest that disciplinary knowledge and teaching practices are socially constructed in interactions among colleagues, students, and the settings in which they teach. The findings also raise questions about calls for the implementation of new paradigms with little consideration for the personal and professional lives of teachers, needs of particular students, or particular social and cultural contexts.

Related Studies and Theoretical Frameworks

Central to any discussion of English teachers and their teaching of literature is an understanding of the various perspectives that have informed the research and theory on literature instruction in the secondary school. Previous large-scale studies of literature instruction in the United States (e.g., Applebee, 1993; Smith, 1932; Squire & Applebee, 1968) reflected the concerns of literacy educators at the time in which the studies were conducted – literary appreciation, selections of texts, and curriculum. However, they revealed little about the perspectives or concerns of teachers. Yet many of those same studies ended with questions about teachers' practices: their apparent resistance to consideration of newer methods of literature instruction or their use of methods that represented conflicting paradigms. For example, Applebee (1993) found that even when teachers adopted some features of a student-centered literature curriculum and added a few non-traditional texts, they still relied primarily on a New Critical approach that focused on literary form.

Theories on the positions of readers in relation to literary texts emerged with the work of Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) and gradually appeared in texts directed toward English educators and classroom teachers (e.g., Dias, 1987; Langer, 1982; Probst, 1988; Purves & Beach, 1972). The focus on literature instruction has shifted again in recent years toward critical readings of texts. One of the proponents of this shift, Willinsky (1990), used the "New Literacy" to describe theories of literacy that take into account the "symbolic processes that govern the classroom" and address questions about the relationships among language, difference, and representations of gender and social class in literature (p. 224). The strength of the New Literacy, according to Willinsky, "is repeated reinforcement of the social enterprise of literacy" (p. 226). He envisioned a New Literacy classroom as a place where readers are encouraged to contest and examine texts:

> It is not enough to have the students find and express themselves, to elaborate their responses. For they are being articulated in the process, and that question of what they might become needs to be opened and wondered at as part of the response and the writing, just as the school's changing role needs to be examined as a restructuring of literacy. (p. 226).

Literacy scholars now argue against reading texts within a particular academic tradition without questioning the conflicting perspectives that inform that tradition (e.g., Graff, 1992; Hines, 1995; Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998). A number of secondary school English educators now believe

that literature instruction should include reading for critical thinking and inquiry (e.g., Applebee, 1974; Beach, Appleman, & Dorsey, 1990; Rabinowitz & Smith, 1998). Yet we know little about experienced English teachers' perspectives on these issues, especially those whose graduate work could be characterized as representing the New Literacy (Willinsky, 1990).

This study addresses two teachers' perspectives on teaching and reading literature after encountering New Literacy theory and research in their doctoral work. Two areas of theory, closely related to one another, frame these teachers' perspectives and reflections on their literature instruction. Theories of Identity and Lived Experience frame the personal side of their literature instruction – how their life experiences intersected with graduate studies and the demands of teaching. Theories on Settings frame both the personal and public dimensions of their teaching. In particular, Moll's (1997) theory on "funds of knowledge" was valuable in showing how these teachers' experiences in past and present settings informed their practices. Theory on identity and setting provided ways of highlighting the tensions that emerged in these teachers' literature instruction as they negotiated the complex intersections among theories of teaching and learning, identity, setting, and practice.

Three related research questions guided this study: How are these experienced teachers' purposes for and approaches to literature instruction shaped by their graduate study, their identities, and the settings in which they teach? What funds of knowledge inform their literature instruction? How do they reflect on and negotiate tensions between their purposes for teaching literature and the constraints of the school and community settings?

The Role of Identity in Teaching Literature

Discussions on theories of identity have given rise to the use of several terms – self, personhood, and selfhood – that are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes delineated as separate in meaning. For this paper, I use the term *identity* as Baumeister (1997) defined it:

> Personal identity is a crucial interface between the private organism and society. The identity represents an important means by which the physical being takes its place in society so as to communicate and interact with other people. Meanwhile the broader society assigns roles to the individual and shapes the values the person holds, so that identity is also an important means by which society can influence

> and control his or her behavior. It is no more correct to say that the individual is passively created by society than it is to regard society as a mere outcome of the choices and actions of autonomous, self-determined individuals; self and society shape each other. (p. 191).

According to Bruner (1990), identity is not only socially and culturally mediated, but is represented through the narratives that people use to describe their own actions and interactions with others. He advocated using research to discover how identity is "defined by *both* the individual *and* by the culture in which he or she participates." Examining the narratives that people construct provides an understanding of their conceptions as well as their rationales for them: "The Self as narrator not only recounts but justifies." (p. 121). Bruner also noted the importance of understanding the contexts that shape identity. Attention to constructions of identity are based on the belief that "in most human interaction 'realities' are the results of prolonged and intricate processes of construction and negotiation deeply embedded in the culture" (p. 24).

The idea of identity as a social construct, one that can change as an individual negotiates different contexts, was especially relevant to this study of two teachers as they made a transition from graduate study to high school classrooms. According to scholars of human behavior (e.g., Gergen, 1982; Goffman, 1959; Sampson, 1977), individuals can adjust to different settings through reflection on their own behavior in relation to other people or settings. Gergen observed that an individual has the capacity "to review his or her own patterns of conduct, and whatever their basis, alter them according to some standard" (1982, p. 158). This capacity suggests that a teacher, for example, could use reflection to gauge the appropriateness of his or her actions according to "some standard" inherent in particular school settings. Examining personal reflections to see what standards an individual uses to gauge appropriate or effective behaviors can reveal that negotiative process. Understanding what is being negotiated and why helps to explain the underlying tensions between individual identity and various social settings.

The idea that identity and behavior were negotiated in response to external standards suggested the earlier work of Goffman (1959). I was interested in identity as social role, from the perspective of performer and from the perspective of audience. Role identity for teachers is culturally constructed, just as it is for priests and judges. Goffman described as performance the actions of someone who "takes on an established social role: Usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it" (p. 27). Thus on one level, this study considers the role of an English teacher as it is constructed in theory and research, both past and present. On a second level,

this study examined these teachers' perspectives on their roles and how they negotiated a compromise among differing cultural and theoretical roles in their particular school settings.

A focus on teachers' identities and perspectives is relatively new in educational theory and research. Seidman (1991) noted, "So much research is done on schooling in the United States; yet so little of it is based on studies involving the perspective of the students, teachers, and administrators, counselors . . . whose individual and collective experience constitutes schooling" (p. 4). Some scholars like Goodson (1992) believe that understanding teachers' histories or lived experiences can help researchers better understand teacher practice. He urged researchers to examine "views on the relationship between 'school life' and 'whole life' for in that dialectic crucial tales about careers and commitments will be told" (p. 16).

Recent scholarship on teachers' identities and lived experiences has begun to redefine teaching and teachers in theory and research in teacher education. Theories on reflective practice (e.g., Schon, 1983; 1987) helped to bring attention to the ways that practitioners develop specific kinds of expertise; others like Van Manen (1990) sought to dispel the idea that a teacher possesses a set of pedagogical skills that can be applied uniformly. He brought teacher identity and reflective practice together in his definition of pedagogy:

> Pedagogy is not something that can be 'had,' 'possessed,' in the way that we can say that a person 'has' or 'possesses' a set of specific skills or performative competencies. Rather pedagogy is something that a . . . teacher continuously must redeem, retrieve, regain, recapture in the sense of recalling. Every situation in which I must act educationally with children requires that I must continuously and reflectively be sensitive to what authorizes me as pedagogic teacher or parent (p. 149).

Pedagogy, according to Van Manen, is an ethical process that involves thinking about self and other, especially in responding to individual students. He argued that sound pedagogical theory draws on knowledge or expertise in a field but foregrounds knowledge of a particular child and what is appropriate for that child. Examining or reflecting on pedagogy, according to Van Manen, requires a focus on "the *theory of the unique*, of the particular case" (p. 150).

How an educator uses reflection to inform pedagogy is also critical to understanding the positioning of self in relation to practice. Van Manen proposed that "pedagogic competence manifests itself not only in praxis. . . . It manifests itself as well in theorizing, in which the parent or professional educator reflectively brings to speech the meaning of pedagogic situations" (1990,

p. 160). Reflection, according to Van Manen, should be used to theorize about and articulate the deeper meanings of practice.

Schon (1983) defined the reflections of practitioners as they are involved in their work as tacit and routine. This kind of reflection, for Schon, is intuitive and relies on a "feel for" the rightness of a task. At another level, reflection involves testing hypotheses and engaging in an inner dialogue. At this level, an individual begins to interrogate his or her actions by allowing the situation to "talk back: He shapes the situation, but in conversation with it, so that his own models and appreciations are also shaped by the situation" (pp. 150-151). Through this conversation, the practitioner can reframe a problem in a way that invites thinking about new strategies. Important to this reflective process, Schon argued, is the way in which a practitioner "develops his own way of framing his role:"

> Whether he chooses his role frame from the profession's repertoire, or fashions it for himself, his professional knowledge takes on the character of a system. The problems he sets, the strategies he employs, the facts he treats as relevant, and his interpersonal theories of action are bound up with his way of framing his role. (p. 210)

Thus identity, experience, and action are bound up with strategic, dialogic reflections. Taken together, they offer a way of understanding teachers' "interpersonal theories" on literature instruction. As the teachers in this study reflected on their lives, their students and their literature instruction, they often commented on who they were as teachers and how their identities shaped their teaching in specific ways.

The Impact of Settings on Identity and Practice

Identity, as the discussion above indicates, is intimately connected with the expectations and standards inherent in particular settings. Teaching literature includes far more than a teacher, a set of literary texts, and knowledge of particular literary conventions. As the teachers in this study understood, it also includes personal lives of teachers and students and the larger expectations of the school and community.

In school settings, diverse values and beliefs inevitably produce tensions about what texts should be included in the curriculum. In addition, values and decisions about how things should be

done are "communal and consequential in terms of our relations to a cultural community" (Bruner, 1990, p. 29). Understanding the perspectives and behaviors of individuals, according to Moll (1997; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and others (e.g., Cole, 1996; Goffman, 1959; Sarason, 1997), requires understanding their prior experiences in other settings that have shaped their beliefs and decisions. Thus, it is difficult to talk about these English teachers' pedagogies without addressing their identities and lived experiences in relation to their students, their colleagues, and the communities beyond the school to which they belonged.

The links between home and school settings have been of special interest to Moll (Moll, et al., 1992). He theorized that home and community settings represented "funds of knowledge" that were often ignored in school settings. In his first attempts to involve teachers in learning about their students' funds of knowledge, Moll found unanticipated obstacles that he attributed to the school setting, in this case an after-school program in Tucson, Arizona.

> Two problems that we did not anticipate, regardless of the many hints at them . . . hindered these efforts. One was that some school personnel, including the principal, did not approve of our pedagogy at the after-school program. The children were deemed too boisterous, the activities were believed to be too unstructured, and positive outcomes were perceived as unlikely or at least not readily apparent or forthcoming. The other was that the teachers in the school, including those who agreed to work with us, attended sporadically the after-school setting; they were busy, tired, or not sufficiently motivated to attend by what they saw at the setting. (p. 193)

Both the school setting and the teachers' attitudes about the after-school program became critical factors in the research project. Only after involving teachers in activities that took them outside the school and focused on the students' home settings, and the funds of knowledge that students brought to school from those settings, did the teachers become more involved in the project. However, even though Moll and the other researchers assumed that creating such connections between home and school settings would influence teachers' instruction, they found "the systemic links to classroom practice were more elusive" (p. 197).

As will be shown in this paper, teachers bring their own funds of knowledge from diverse settings to bear on pedagogy. Research on schools and student learning that overlooks teachers' perspectives, as Moll's study illustrates, risks encountering problems in carrying out the research and ending with more questions than answers. As Moll (Moll, et al., 1992) discovered, the schedules and administrative policies of school settings sometimes force teachers into defensive

or resistant stances. The demands of teaching may also provoke conflicts between teachers' personal lives and school responsibilities. Understanding teachers' perspectives on the tensions that they experience in negotiating multiple expectations offers an ecological view of teaching that is grounded in the particulars that shape practice.

Understanding the impact of settings on teachers' perspectives also involves, as Gee (1996/1998) pointed out, attending not just to the various forms of discourse that take place in present settings but also how the histories and physical manifestations of those settings have helped to construct current roles and relationships:

> Knowing how to make sense by reading, writing, talking, or listening is, we might say, a matter of being in sync with other people in the enacting of particular identities or 'forms of life' (Discourse). However, it is not *just* a matter of being in sync with people. We live and move in a material world; the things in it – objects, visual representations, machines, and tools – take part in our dramas of meaning as well. Furthermore, we enter into social relations not just with the living and the present but with the dead and the absent, thanks to the workings of history and institutions that tie us together (like clubs, academic disciplines, and countries). We need now to get *things* and *history* more deeply embedded into our account of meaning making. (p. 183).

Schools, in particular, almost always have institutional histories that are deeply embedded in present-day discourses and ways of making meaning. The power of institutional history to position teachers and students was evident in Rogers' (1997) study of an eleventh-grade English teacher who made critical inquiry and multicultural texts the center of her literature instruction. The teacher had to consciously work against a variety of obstacles, from student resistance to limited availability of texts beyond the anthology. Rogers concluded: "This kind of teaching is not sanctioned by the larger culture of high schools and by the norms for teaching English in the United States" (p. 113). Beach (1995) discovered a similar phenomenon in his study of adolescent students who resisted reading about those with different values and perspectives. The whole history of teaching literature in secondary school settings was the larger opposing force that provoked these kinds of resistance.

The larger community also positions schools and teachers in particular relationships to students and curriculum. English teachers and literature instruction are increasingly suspect in many communities. This distrust is historical, a fact that becomes apparent when examining challenges to texts documented over the years by the American Library Association. Such

challenges have prompted many teachers to narrow the literature curriculum through self-censoring (see Agee, 1999; Cerra, 1994; Noll, 1994).

Some of the earlier qualitative research on experienced English teachers upon which the present study builds also focused on teacher identity. Elbaz (1981), for example, examined the "practical knowledge" of an English teacher against the larger constructions of teacher identity often found in the literature on teachers. Elbaz argued that most research on teachers is reductive and ignores the "work done by teachers as the complex activity that it is" (p. 43), and concluded that teachers possessed valuable stores of practical knowledge that are often ignored by researchers and others. Teachers, according to Elbaz, "may be unaware of the value of their own knowledge. Certainly there is little encouragement for teachers to view themselves as originators of knowledge" (p. 45).

In a later study of experienced high school English teachers, Zancanella (1991) examined the impact of high school teachers' personal histories as readers on their conceptions of and approaches to teaching literature. Zancanella concluded that the perspectives of these teachers on literature instruction were strongly shaped by their identities. He urged researchers to "begin to connect teachers' pasts – all that they bring to a teaching event – to the present of classroom actions" (p. 218).

Bringing together theories of identity and settings highlights the funds of knowledge teachers bring from their own lived experiences and their graduate programs to their teaching particular students in particular schools. This paper uses these theoretical perspectives to present the complex dialectic that informed the literature instruction of two experienced English teachers who brought different versions of the "New Literacy" to their classrooms.

METHOD

To illustrate the perspectives of individual teachers on their literature instruction, this study was designed as a multi-case (and multi-site) interpretive study. Case studies allowed for an in depth examination of situated teachers, as people who were making decisions based on particular funds of knowledge and contextual factors. Merriam (1998) described the interpretive case study as unique because the design offers "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or a bounded system" (p. 19). This research focused on teachers' literature instruction as a bounded system. Multi-site designs and rich descriptions of cases, Merriam noted, can "maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest" (pp. 211-212). Looking at the literature instruction of two teachers' in differing settings highlighted important themes across case data.

The case study method was especially effective in focusing on how these teachers drew on different funds of knowledge as they made decisions about literature instruction in the midst of ongoing tensions. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, a qualitative case study can offer the kind of "thick description" described by Geertz (1973) and opportunities to explore multiple "constructed realities" (1985, p. 84).

For Merriam (1998), case studies offer "an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (p. 19). Lincoln and Guba (1985) called the case study "the primary vehicle for emic inquiry" because it "builds on the reader's tacit knowledge" (p. 359). The case studies offer the teachers' voices as well as a view of their practice in the classroom. Cross-case comparisons offer a holistic view and the themes that emerged across these data. Creswell (1998) described a similar framing as important to the methodology of case studies: "Nowhere is the context more apparent than in a qualitative case study, where one describes the setting for the case from the more general description to the more specific description" (p. 78).

These cases, then, are constructed from multiple data sources in order to develop a richer understanding of the teachers' perspectives on their instruction and how various funds of knowledge and settings informed their instruction. Data sources included an initial guided, audiotaped interview, videotapes of each teacher teaching literature in three classes, artifacts such as handouts that pertained to the lessons videotaped. Data also included a book selection protocol and a final audiotaped interview that addressed their responses to the videotapes and reflections on their teaching.

The initial semi-structured interview was designed to be as open-ended as possible while evoking responses to key issues that would illuminate the factors that shaped their literature instruction. (See Appendix A for interview questions.) The interview questions also provided an overarching structure for analyzing data across the cases.

For the book selection protocol, I asked each teacher to look at a list of novels (see Appendix B) and to indicate one of four choices: "Would definitely teach; might teach; would definitely not teach; or have not read." After they completed the written protocol, I interviewed them about their responses.

Because videotaping was the most intrusive method of data collecting, I tried to help the teachers feel comfortable about it. The videotapes were an important source of data in several ways. As Hillocks (1999) noted, "research on teacher thinking must involve observation of what teachers do in classrooms" (p. 137). The videotape data offered a method for seeing how the teachers' self-reported purposes and approaches were manifested during their instruction. Their responses to the videotapes were also important for seeing how they reflected on their literature instruction, especially when they offered explanations for events that confirmed or called into question what they expected to see. As noted above, the teachers' responses were explored with open-ended questions in an audiotaped interview.

Selection of School Sites

The schools where these teachers taught differed along several dimensions. One taught in a large suburban school in upstate New York with a nearly all-white student body. The other taught in a small urban fine arts magnet school with a racially diverse student body. These different school settings and the teachers' perspectives on them provided data on how powerfully school settings affect instruction. I was also interested in what general themes would emerge across different school sites.

The Participants

Van Manen (1990) and Stake (1994) argued for focusing on a particular case that offers possibilities for learning something new, even when the case is atypical. Stake reasoned that "often it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than from a magnificently typical case" (1994, p. 243). The case study teachers described below were selected from a larger study of 18 high school English teachers across five school sites. For the larger study, I chose experienced teachers who had taught long enough (at least five years) to have developed criteria for selections of literary texts and strategies for dealing with the tensions inherent in teaching high school literature. The teachers volunteered to participate after an informal question and answer session at each school where I explained the purpose of the research and the kinds of data I would collect. Each teacher received a small stipend for participating in this research.

For this paper I selected two teachers because they had recently completed doctoral work in progressive programs. Moreover they had participated in the larger study as well as a smaller overlapping study, and I had a rich set of data on their personal lives, their perspectives on literature instruction, and their approaches to literature with their students. I felt it was important to look at teachers who not only had more experience but also had encountered through graduate work the new literacies that English educators have advocated in the past decade. Although we have many studies of preservice and novice English teachers and what they bring from their prior experiences to their pedagogy (e.g., Agee, 1998; Grossman, 1990), the perspectives of experienced English teachers who go from progressive graduate programs back into public secondary school classrooms are rare. The accounts we do have, such as Allen's story (1995) of returning to the classroom with a doctorate, focus primarily on practice. We know little about the impact of advanced graduate work on experienced teachers' epistemologies, the issues these teachers struggle with as they attempt to implement more progressive approaches, or the contextual factors that shape their goals and practices.

Although the two teachers selected were atypical in terms of their levels of education and their schools, the particulars of their cases offer much insight into how experienced teachers bring their identities and various funds of knowledge – including graduate work and home lives – into their literature instruction. However they were typical in others ways. Both were female and white, a reflection of the typical profile of high school English teachers (Fuller, 1992). Both taught in

public schools where public policies and expectations often precipitated tensions as they sought to meet the needs of their students.

The teachers were invited to respond to the study in several ways. The videotape protocol offered them an opportunity to reflect on and respond to data on their teaching, and they read and responded to their case studies. The names of participants and schools in this report are pseudonyms.

Researcher Role

After teaching secondary school and college English for a number of years, I have been conscious for some time of the representations of English teachers in both theory and research. Teachers often appeared in research and theory as a collective group with no individual identity or agency. They were assigned a collective role as well, delivering content according to methods specified by others. They were also regularly implicated in failed reform efforts – impeding, resisting, or ignoring whatever methodologies were advocated at the time.

I became interested not only in theoretical positions on literature instruction and curriculum but also why there were such negative generalizations about teachers. These generalizations implied a lack of professional knowledge and a lack of power in the professional community. I was also interested in the experiences of English teachers who chose to return to public school classrooms after graduate work. Thus my own history shaped the perspectives that I bring to bear on these data.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the interview transcript data using constant comparison, a method that involves constantly comparing events, behaviors, beliefs, etc., across data. The method of analysis for the audiotaped interview transcripts involved transferring files to Q.S.R. NUD-IST®, a computer database created for qualitative analyses, and developing statements describing events, behaviors, beliefs, etc., in the data, a process called open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To make further refinements, two research assistants independently coded each of the interview transcripts. We met

weekly to review and discuss coding. When differences were noted, we redefined codes. The next step involved establishing relationships among codes, an inductive process called axial coding that involved organizing open codes into new categories after "making connections between a category and its subcategories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). After developing tentative categories to describe the factors that shaped these teachers' literature curricula, I looked at how well the data supported these categories.

The preliminary categories that emerged across these data suggested that these teachers brought a number of deeply embedded prior experiences to their conceptions of teaching literature as well as responses to their particular school and community settings. Early experiences with literature at home and at school as well as life-transforming experiences continued to influence the kinds of literary texts they selected and their purposes for teaching literature. The school setting, especially students, also shaped their decisions about literature instruction. Analyses showed that they considered many student-related factors: (a) number of students in the class, (b) sensitivity to student's economic situation, (c) student ability and grade level, (d) attitudes of students toward certain texts or genres, (e) maturity level of students, (f) perceived needs of students, and (g) connections with students' lives (gender, age, race, etc.). Teachers' numerous references to their students suggested that a larger category on students – "Responses to Students' Needs" – should be developed from these subcategories.

The analyses of the videotapes of each teacher's classes involved a multi-step process. First, I watched tapes with two graduate research assistants, taking observational notes that would help to establish a coding scheme. Then we identified instructional segments that we thought offered particularly rich examples of each teacher's literature instruction. Instructional segments were marked by a distinct shift in instruction and involved a clearly defined activity that was directly relevant to the teaching of literature rather than tangential areas such as vocabulary or writing tasks. For example, in an interview, one teacher talked about using an activity called "Deep Talk" as particularly effective. When she used this activity in one of the videotaped classes, we analyzed that segment of the tape to see how her self-reported purposes for teaching were represented in her instruction.

We watched each videotape numerous times, with each coder attending to different aspects of the instruction: kinds of talk, kinds of instruction (small-group, lecture, etc.), movements of the teacher around the room, organization and use of physical space in the room, and functions of the

instruction. Many studies of secondary school English classrooms rely on patterns of discourse to describe classroom interactions (e.g., Marshall, 1989; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991), but we found *visible* differences that were important as well. Non-verbal behaviors, physical arrangements of the room, and movements of the teachers contributed to a richer, more contextualized picture of these teachers' classrooms. Zuengler, Ford, and Fassnacht (1999) advocated the use of videotaping to capture the visual dimensions of classroom activities, especially non-verbal elements such as gestures or eye contact that are very much a part of the ways in which teachers and students interact. A summary at the end of observational notes we made (while watching one teacher) described her non-verbal interactions:

> The teacher walks around the classroom throughout the whole class, either monitoring students' work or while eliciting students' answers. Whenever a student contributes with a comment or response, she approaches that student, establishes eye contact, and remains in place until the student has finished. Finally, the teacher uses hand gestures as a means of paralinguistic expression throughout the class, as well as smiling and intense eye contact. (field notes)

Visual data provided important information on these teachers' non-verbal interactions with their students and their rooms as visible evidence of their purposes for teaching literature. More importantly, the teachers themselves also focused on these elements as they reflected on the videotapes. Part of the analyses of the interview and video data also involved looking at how the teachers' reflections on and explanations of their approaches to literature with their students aligned with their self-reported purposes and their identities.

TWO TEACHERS TEACHING LITERATURE

Each case study below opens with a scene from the teacher's classroom. This scene is from a transcribed excerpt from a videotape of one class. Following the excerpt is the teacher's reflection on what she observed about herself, her students, and her literature instruction as she watched the videotape. The full case then follows. This sequence is intended to highlight the setting in which each teacher taught and her perspectives on her practice.

Literature Instruction in Claire's Classes

Claire's classroom was filled with shelves of paperbacks and other reading materials such as current periodicals and newspapers. The walls were covered with posters, many of them from books or movies about African Americans. Student desks were arranged in a double-rowed horseshoe pattern, and Claire's desk was tucked into a back corner with a small bookshelf packed with paperback contemporary fiction and photos of her family. Comfortable old chairs in corners gave students a place to curl up with a book.

In an eleventh-grade class, the discussion centered on *Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger, which the students had just finished reading. Claire moved to the front of the room and asked the students to move into small groups to talk about the main character, Holden Caulfield, and the language he used. The students moved into self-selected groups without further instruction. Then Claire walked around the room stopping to sit in with each group for a short time. The group discussions were lively, with laughter, objections, and students listening thoughtfully to their peers. Afterwards, Claire brought them back together to share their thoughts.

Claire:	Who wants to go first and give us something to think about? Go ahead [nods to student], nice and loud, everybody needs to hear.
Student 1:	Well, we talked about a lot of things, like just Holden, himself, and the language. I asked everybody what they really liked about the book, and Stephen really enjoyed the cynicism. And, um, Jim really didn't like it because of his attitude towards things. I really didn't like the language because I found it offensive, but we brought up a good point: if it didn't have the language, then it wouldn't be the same story. Because, I think, the language is in tune to teenagers, because if you walk down the hall and you really listen to some of the conversations, you really can't make it about five steps without a lot of people using this type of language.
Claire:	What do you mean about the cynicism?
S1:	Well, just the fact that, you know, he doesn't care anymore. You know, just his overall attitude towards things.
Claire:	And why doesn't he care about anything?
S1:	Well, because he knows he's failing out of his school.
Claire:	OK.

S1: So he knows that there's really no point in his actually trying, so he just wants to have as much fun as he can.

Claire: OK.

S1: So, you know, this happened three times before, so now it's happening again.

Claire: Which is probably a deeper issue: why has it happened three times before? And this is the fourth school that Holden is flunking out of. Who wants to answer this group? Or who wants to bring up things and just say, but I disagree? OK, we've got somebody who doesn't like it – someone who doesn't like the language, somebody who thinks, you know, it's the cynicism that appeals to him. Does anybody want to direct anything at those? [Hands go up in back.] That group back there.

S2: I'll say something about the language: I don't really – it doesn't even faze me that it's in there, because – I can see how it was so controversial, like, back in the Sixties, or something like that, but like now it doesn't seem like any big deal.

Claire: OK. Why?

S2: Just because, I mean, it's everywhere you go. I mean, it's not even like the words; you know what I mean. It's just so common.

Claire: Um hmm. What does that say about our society, our world?

S2: I don't know. Maybe swearing is, like, the most, like, safe way to relieve stress because it's not like really hurting anyone. It's not like doing any physical harm or anything.

Claire's Reflections

When Claire shared her reactions to the videotapes, one of the first things she commented on was her interaction with students: "I realized that I'm very comfortable with my students, and I think I always knew that. But to actually watch it, you know, visually, to see just how at ease I am with them, I think it made me feel good. I realized how much I really enjoy teaching and being with teenagers. I just love those kids." However, she was also critical of herself: "The first class, the eleventh graders, with *Catcher in the Rye*, I continually seem to be asking more questions after they made a comment, or each group made a comment, I always seemed to be firing more things at them." She noted that after a class ended, she reflected on discourse patterns:

> Sometimes I felt that I didn't let kids finish, and I always wonder about that. "Did I give her a chance to say what she wanted to say before I opened my big mouth?"

> And I'm always thinking about that. I'm always conscious of the discourse . . . Who didn't talk? Who do I need to make sure I tap the next day?

Claire also noted the physical environment of her room in the videotape and saw it as a statement about her identity: "I noticed my room, also, and I think that's a part of who I am. It's just so lived in and messy, and just littered literally with all types of printed material and posters and books." The posters of African Americans also reflected one of her purposes for teaching literature: to introduce her students, mostly white, to other races and cultures. She commented, "I at least surround these kids with those pictures of color, and I do that consciously, although it's always been a part of me. But when I was looking at the tapes, I was saying, 'Boy, that sure looks good.' You know, no one ever says anything, but it just kind of washes over them. And it's part of who I am." Claire's reflection pointed to a number of issues that influenced her teaching of literature – her identity and her purpose for teaching certain kinds of literature in a school setting that consisted largely of white middle-class students.

The Setting in Which Claire Taught Literature

Claire had taught for 18 years, most of them at Richardson, a large suburban high school in upstate New York. She had earned a doctorate in English Education a few years earlier, and had chosen to return to Richardson because she enjoyed working with high school students. She lived just a few miles from the high school and had two sons who were enrolled in elementary and middle schools in the district.

Claire taught four classes on a block schedule at Richardson. One was a senior level class for students in an at-risk program developed by the school district, another was an eleventh-grade Regent's class, and two were twelfth-grade classes. One of the twelfth-grade classes was offered in conjunction with a university program, and the students earned college credit for completing the course.

Richardson, a sprawling, one-story brick structure, was located in a fast-growing, middle-class community that had originally been farmland. New houses were appearing in what had previously been pastures and orchards. The school was in the process of adding a new wing to

accommodate the growing student body. The students, predominately white, lived either in the newer neighborhoods or in rural areas that still bordered the community.

Richardson reflected the split in the socioeconomic makeup of the school population. Many of the students came from the relatively new middle and upper-middle class neighborhoods in the community and would go on to four-year colleges. Other students came from families who farmed or worked in low-wage jobs. Many of these students would go to community colleges or go into the workforce after graduation. A second split, more political in nature, also was reflected in the relationship between the English Department and some members of the community. Many of the students' parents valued education and supported English teachers' use of contemporary texts and critical readings. However, a small but vocal group of retired citizens and school parents regularly opposed tax increases for the school district as well as the teaching of controversial texts or issues. In recent years, several of the English teachers at Richardson had been forced to defend to the administration and school board their selections of literary texts.

In spite of these tensions, a high degree of collegiality existed in the English department. Claire talked about the support she and her colleagues had when making selections of literary texts:

> You know, it's nice to get the whole department to read this book, and talk about it, and you need to get at least, you know, four or five readers, and that's never hard to get. If a colleague who's worked here for a long time has chosen a book, and we respect that person, there's just not even a problem. We read it to have a good read. . . . And that's fine. You're going to use that? Fine. But I realize we're in a public school, and they're conservative, usually, and especially in our community.

The teachers in the English department worked together to meet challenges and to mentor new colleagues. A first-year teacher in the department, who participated in a smaller, parallel study, summed up his assessment of his colleagues in this way: "The department is very liberal, for the most part. They would back me up on whatever decision I made, even if, you know, they didn't totally agree with it [my decision]. . . . So I feel there is a lot of support." Adding to this feeling of support were monthly departmental meetings where teachers exchanged ideas for teaching or asked colleagues to give them feedback on new approaches.

How Claire's Literature Instruction Was Tied to Her Identity

Claire's literature instruction was strongly influenced by life experiences that had radicalized her thinking about literary texts and ways of reading them. The death of her older brother in Vietnam was one event that "had a profound effect on my direction . . . what I was doing, and where I wanted to go." Her disillusionment pushed her toward "radical kinds of books." Another push came from passionate discussions about equity that her father brought to the family dinner table:

> I think I was born a liberal kind of person. I remember my father talking about the unions in the thirties. Going out to Chicago, and fighting for the insurance workers' unions. . . . I was also kind of influenced by that democratic, liberal kind of stance.

These experiences inspired her interest in books that dealt with social justice. African Americans' struggles became important to her: "I love novels of the Civil Rights Movement. I am always looking for those."

She described reading as an escape from a dysfunctional home life, something that separated her from her parents' problems:

> Books for me were just such an outlet, something where I could turn off what else was going on in my life. I remember never being read to as a child. My father was really alcoholic, and my mother was a kind of screamer, and so I just don't remember any kind of good memories there, as far as reading.

During these years, she found solace at the small public library down the street from her home:

> I'd have to walk these six long blocks back home, with my arms just breaking with books. I had read all the biographies in the section. I would just come home at night, arms just full of books, and go right upstairs to my room, and just start reading.

In contrast, reading at the Catholic schools that Claire attended was, as she described it, "painful." She talked about how she disliked both the kinds of texts she had to read and ways of reading them: "I'll never forget it, because I hated it so much. We did *Moby Dick*, and "The Old Man and the Sea." It was just lots of ocean-going seafaring things. . . . I just did not like those at all." Even more upsetting to her, though, were the ways in which literary texts were read:

> No one ever said that there was even a hint that Othello was a darker skinned man. It just *never came up*, ever. . . . I remember feeling so dreadfully angry at the end of high school. I was into college a few years before I had my consciousness raised

> about women in literature. Because I had read none. I mean, *no* women in high school. *Never.*

When a high school friend passed along a copy of *Manchild in the Promised Land* by Claude Brown, the book had a long-term effect on her thinking about literature:

> I was so rocked that I felt like my head exploded. . . . I had no idea that there were Black writers out there talking about this whole other world . . . and so I went to the library, and I found Richard Wright. . . . I just remember reading *Native Son* when I was seventeen years old. That was it for me. I needed to read all kinds of literature by African American writers. It became an obsession.

These powerful early experiences with reading influenced Claire's teaching of literature in a number of ways, especially in terms of the kinds of books she selected for her students and her goals for teaching literature.

The Tensions for Claire in Teaching Literature

Social issues and "books with an edge" were the centerpiece of Claire's literature curriculum. In our first interview, she said, "I'm always looking for compelling kinds of events and scenes. I want kids to know about, you know, fuller lives, and backgrounds, other than their little ones in white bread suburbia." Her own transforming experiences with African American and feminist literature were reflected in many of her literature selections: "I tend to look for the other kinds of voices, and I don't consciously stay away from the white male author. But I'll tend to look at, you know, the authors of color, and women authors." She chose books she believed would get students engaged in reading and those that would broaden their perspectives.

Yet the "white bread" suburban community setting influenced Claire's selection of texts in another way. She realized that her use of contemporary and non-traditional books made her vulnerable to complaints by parents, and she read potential selections with mixed emotions: "Not that I haven't found really good books that don't have the sex and things in them. But it seems like the best books I've found, there will be that page." She acknowledged that the more conservative voices in the community created tensions for her in making choices about literary texts: "So it [the community] does affect what I choose."

In our initial interview, Claire said she had one major goal for teaching literature: "I tell the kids that when I see them ten years from now, the most important question they have to answer for me will be, 'What are you reading now?' I mean, that's just so important. . . . I just want them to love reading." To implement that goal, she read widely, "I always read with eleventh grade eyes, tenth grade, whatever class I'm teaching." Yet she voiced a conflict that that would surface again in later interviews: "You know that whole rap . . . the valuable this and that. I don't know. Do they need to know them *all*?"

A related tension for Claire was deciding how much autonomy to give to her students, especially concerning the books they chose to read. She felt her students, especially her seniors, should be treated as adults: "Anything I read, even for myself, I'm always thinking of bringing into the classroom. I've probably got thousands of books that I have put on the shelves, and I tell the kids, 'These are adult themes. These are adult books for the most part. And you're free to borrow them.'"

Another source of tension emerged as she debated between two different teacher roles as she sought to both encourage and direct their reading. She wanted them to be reading, yet she also wanted to give them some choice about what they were reading: "My students must always be reading a book. So, some months it would be a common title that we're doing in class. The other months I say, 'The choice for this month, make sure it's by an African-American writer, or someone from another culture, or this month, we want a historical fiction.'" But when some students brought in only popular fiction, Claire found herself questioning her stance and her role:

> I'm thinking, well, what's more important? Don't I just want them reading, which I do? So I tend to be very liberal with that, and let them read those. If a kid is always just bringing those – Stephen King, Stephen King, Stephen King – and I have kids who want to do that, then I have to be that teacher person in intervening.

Being "that teacher person" was not a role that Claire felt comfortable with, but she knew how to move into it and use it when student-centered approaches failed. In spite of her liberal stance, she struggled with many questions about what it meant to "teach literature."

She especially struggled with questions about what kinds of experiences with literature her students needed. In our initial interview, she confessed, "I'm always wrestling with this, you know, literature, with the capital *L* versus literature with the small *l*." She wanted to get students hooked

on reading and believed contemporary "books with an edge" accomplished this: "For some kids who hate reading, they come in to me and say, 'First book I've ever read.'"

Even with these successes, she continued to question her decisions about "teaching" literary texts: "I'm always wrestling with the question, 'What does *teaching* mean?' You know, 'Why literature anyway?' I tell this to my students. You know, 'We're reading this together.'" These same questions became apparent in an audiotaped interview following a text selection protocol (see Appendix B). On the protocol she indicated with a check mark by each novel whether she would teach it, might teach it, would not teach it, or had not read it. In the interview, she talked about her decisions and what tensions existed for her in making some choices:

Claire: You know, I've changed over the years, and gone from this way to that way, like classics and contemporary. It used to be all contemporary, and then I said, "Now that I have my own kids, I want them [her students] to know classics, too. You know, I want them to know it all, and there's not enough time."

R: So you started with classics, and went to contemporary?

Claire: Absolutely.

R: And now you're shifting back with a mix. . . .

Claire: Yeah.

R: Yeah. Those are the kinds of dilemmas that teachers. . .

Claire: All the time, you know? And not that it would be the end of the world . . . if a kid went through without reading any classics, but read every other kind of writing and author in the twentieth century, or you know, the 1970s on. That would be fine. But, you know, there's just something, that pull, that English teachers feel. Yeah, for lots of reasons [laughs].

R: [Laughs] What is that pull? I'm seeing a lot of that in the interviews.

Claire: I know it. On some days I could care less about it, you know. And on other days I'm, "Well, you know, maybe it is important that they get a sense of what came before us," or "I just don't believe that there's a pack of books that everyone should read." I mean, that's laughable to me. Because I didn't read *Moby Dick* in its entirety, that doesn't mean I'm not a good person and not a great English teacher. It's that kind of thinking. Like, who can select those lists?

As we're reading *A Doll's House*, and *The Awakening*, there are reasons why I like those works, and even though they're considered classics, the reasons I'm choosing them have absolutely to do with women's issues. And with Ibsen as a man who was able to see ahead and write about Nora in *A Doll's House*. It's great for my young men

> students to understand that a man wrote this, because sometimes they're, "Oh! Is it about women again?" . . .
>
> In our culture, when people don't know who Hester Prynne is, is that such a crime? I don't know. It's not. But I'm thinking, "Well, when I get them next year in twelfth grade, and the Honors course, how can I refer to Hester Prynne, if they don't know what I'm talking about?" You know, so I go into that mode.

That "mode" represented the heart of Claire's inner debate: Did she need to strike a balance between traditional and contemporary literature? How would that balance align with her larger purposes for teaching literature?

Another tension for Claire was trying to use the response-based approaches she valued without sacrificing her personal life. Response journals, for example, offered her an approach for one-to-one dialogs with students and a better understanding of their perspectives on literature, but took more time than Claire liked:

> I really believe that they're the best thing I'm doing, or the kids are doing. But I've always been caught in the trap of wanting to read every word of those. It's a huge task, yet I turn right around and cannot let go of them. And keep reading them.

At the same time they were "the best thing" for her as a teacher, they also were the worst for her personal life: "It just becomes something that's not humanly possible to do. I say that all the time, and meanwhile I'm just a nut case to my family at home, and, you know, I have no time." These kinds of tensions between her personal life and her life as a teacher were ongoing. At issue was how she could sustain practices that represented the "the best" kind of teaching and worked for her students but not for her as a person.

Claire had developed an activity called "Deep Talk" to encourage thoughtful student-centered discussion. In a videotape of her twelfth-grade class, Claire used this activity to explore issues in the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. During the "Deep Talk" activity, Claire called on students at random, and they had to talk for three minutes about a passage they found especially meaningful or puzzling. Afterwards she opened up the discussion to the whole class to further explore questions that had emerged during Deep Talks by various students:

> S1: On page 117, it said that he was coming back, you know? And that his heart was going or something. It kind of got me confused because he didn't want Beloved, so why would he choose that time to start feeling

like emotions again? Because he was so filled with hate or so filled with love for Sethe that that's why he started doing these things?

Claire: How about this, on 117 as long as you're there, just read that last, those last couple of sentences. See if you don't notice something there that can confound this whole thing. [Reads from text] "Red heart, red heart" over and over again. Now read the next line. Oh my God! I'm not understanding now. You know, and how many times have I told you I've read this, and this is the first time I'm looking at that sentence and going, Ooh! [reads the passage]. Oh my God! Was he sleeping through this? Was this a dream?

S1: That's what I said. First time I read it, I said was this a dream?

Claire: Was this a dream? I don't know. This is too much for me now. [inaudible comments from numerous students]

S1: Well, it can't be a dream because Denver [inaudible]

Claire: I would say it can't, that time might have been, but they've done it a number of times, it's been going on and on.

S2: I have a question. Do you think it's just like revenge or whatever, or trying to get Paul D. out of the house, or do you think it's more than that because I think she's kind of confused because she loves Sethe, but she hates her.

After viewing this class on the videotape, she pointed out how being open to students' questions was linked to who she was as a teacher:

> I feel I really don't have to be that on guard with twelfth graders who know me well enough and respect me, and we get along fine, you know? We can just be really honest with each other, and I always notice that. Like, one of the discussions when I was reading the article [article on infanticide that Claire used with *Beloved*]. . . I do that a lot, too. I read out loud to kids parts of things and passages. I tried to think about why I do that, you know? Is it to model different voices in reading and different emotions? . . . I love the relationship I have with my students. Usually all of them. I can't imagine having to face the stern, rigid faces I used to always see everyday in classes when I was in school. I think back on that, and Oh, God, it's so unsettling.

Claire drew on various funds of knowledge as she taught literature. Her approaches to *Beloved* were shaped by her own experiences in school, the kinds of relationships she liked to have with students, and what she had learned about the value of modeling and reading aloud in her graduate work.

The videotapes also provoked Claire to try to figure out why she did certain things and to explain her approach to literature such as *Beloved*:

> You know, this is good [reflecting on the videotapes]. You *should* be confused, trying to figure out what's going on. I remember saying that a number of times, too, you know? I think, again, that gives kids permission to *not* understand what's going on in the story. I really do. I say right here [reference to videotape], um, Lindy was like, "I don't get this. This is confusing." And I said, "This is good. You should be confused." I just think that's a normal place for readers and people who do real reading. I've talked with them about that.

She wanted her students to participate in the puzzles that were part of "real reading," the kind that she experienced and enjoyed. To do so, though, she had to negotiate numerous tensions between traditional and non-traditional content as well as teacher-centered and student-centered models for teaching literature.

Summary

Various funds of knowledge shaped Claire's thinking about literature: prior experiences with reading, family, negative experiences with school literature, and graduate study in English Education. Her thinking and approaches were also shaped by the school and community settings. As she noted, the physical setting of her classroom, her ways of interacting with students, and literature instruction were all tied to her identity. Her primary purpose for teaching literature was to help students become lifelong readers and to know that there were other people in the world who had different experiences and points of view.

Claire wrestled with multiple tensions as she sought to bring together who she was as a person, reader, teacher, and parent. The intersections between her personal life and her literature instruction were reflected in the tensions she felt between what kinds of literature she wanted her own children to read in school and what she should choose for her students. As a result of these tensions, she questioned not only her stance on contemporary texts but also her purposes for teaching literature. She also grappled with how much autonomy to give her high school students and how to be strategic in dealing with parents who might object to particular texts.

The school setting was particularly important to Claire because of the level of support she felt in her department. The collegiality among members of the English Department was evident not just in these data on Claire, but also in data from colleagues who participated in the larger study. That support was critical in creating a setting where Claire could further develop her pedagogy and put

into practice theories of learning she had encountered in her graduate work. It also allowed her space for reflecting on and negotiating dissonance. On the one hand, she felt strongly about including diverse literary texts and giving students more autonomy in reading. On the other, she realized that another part of her identity was "this teacher person" who forced her to question her stance.

CAROLYN

Literature Instruction in Carolyn's Classes

Carolyn's students met in a portable classroom behind the main school building, an old two-story brick structure. Although space in the portable was limited, she had managed to squeeze a rocking chair into one corner. Posters of England and Shakespearean dramas were on the walls. A window-unit air conditioner hummed in response to the humid heat typical in this Georgia city as students took their seats in a double-rowed semi-circle. Nearly half of the ninth-graders were African American, a few were Asian American, and the rest white. The students represented a range of academic abilities.

Carolyn was preparing her ninth-graders for reading *The Odyssey*, a selection from their anthology. She began class by asking the students to spend ten minutes writing in their logs. This was a daily activity, so the students needed no further instruction. After ten minutes, Carolyn stopped them and asked them to spend a few minutes writing on what they knew about ancient Greece. Afterwards, she asked the students to share what they had written.

Carolyn:	Well, enlighten me about Greece. Tell me about Greece. What do you know about Greece? [Student's hand goes up.] Roger?
Roger:	Um, there were religious aspects. There were twelve main gods.
Carolyn:	Okay. All right. So, religion based on a whole range of gods and goddesses. Good. [Other students' hands go up.] Sarah?
Sarah:	The names of the sororities came from the Greek alphabet.
Carolyn:	Yes. We name sororities and fraternities after Greek letters. Such as, can you give me an example?
Sarah:	Delta Sigma Theta.

Carolyn: Yes. Delta Sigma Theta. Greek letters. That's how we refer to sororities and fraternities. Excellent. Okay, go on. What else do you know about Greece? [Hands up]

Mike: It's where the Olympics originated.

This discussion went on for another ten minutes with the ninth-graders contributing their own knowledge about the history of Greece as well as its geographic location. Then Carolyn asked them to think about what they would tell a visitor coming to the United States from another country.

Carolyn: What would you tell your visitor? What do they need to know about living in the United States? [Hands] Sarah?

Sarah: You should treat women with the same respect as a man.

Carolyn: Yes. Treat people with respect. Okay. Um, [looking around room] somebody else? What else do they need to know?

S2: The language.

Carolyn: Yeah, they have a problem not only understanding English perhaps, but understanding particular varieties of English, southern accents, slang that's in vogue at the time, you know. Language, a big issue there. Mike?

Mike: Our laws.

Carolyn: Our laws. What do they need to know about our laws in order to stay out of trouble?

After another five minutes of discussion, Carolyn asked the students to imagine being a visitor in Greece while Homer was working on *The Odyssey* and to write about it in their logs. Afterwards, she asked them if they needed to know more than they already knew to imagine ancient Greece. The students shouted, "Yes!" in unison.

Carolyn's Reflections

After viewing the videotapes of her classes, Carolyn addressed several things that surprised her. Both ninth-grade classes were reading *The Odyssey* and were taped the same day. She first noted how differently she taught each of the ninth-grade classes: "I'm aware of that to some extent, and yet I was a little bit surprised that it was as different as it was." She noted how one class differed from the other:

> In the first class I had forgotten the night before to assign the reading that I wanted them to do. . . . I started that class talking about the cultural aspects that contextualized the poem [*The Odyssey*], but in the second class, I had assigned the reading, so I started out talking about their reflecting on what they had learned from their reading the night before. . . . I found that I liked the first class better because it moved more coherently without that initial reflecting.

She found that the sequencing of the lesson in the second class really subverted what she thought was a more effective approach to *The Odyssey*:

> The problem . . . was that the reading that I had them do was specifically oriented towards the epic form, but it wasn't the *form* that was really the subject of the lesson. It was the history and the culture of that area in that particular place and time.

She also commented on what she noticed about herself as a teacher in her interactions with the students:

> I was also struck, I think, by the fact that I feed off the class. And with a class that's what I call very low energy, I tend to be that way also. With a class that's more active, particularly in that last class, it's the largest class I have. It changes a lot of what I do, of how things work. I am more energetic in that class, because I am aware of the increased need always to be in control with that big group. So, I tend to get myself, I think, more revved up for that class. And it shows in what I'm doing. It shows in what I call the level of their energy. It also gets manifested as an attitude toward what I'm doing.

Carolyn's reflections are strategic in that they address specific ways to help students with their reading of *The Odyssey*. At the same time, as she noted, her approaches to instruction varied depending on her interactions with different groups of students.

Seeing the videotapes made Carolyn realize that her approach reflected who she was as a person and how she interacted with students:

> I think one thing that I really realized in watching the video is, I am not a teacher who can stand behind a lectern and teach from an outline. I move around. I am comfortable doing that. I like walking around the room and being close to kids, when I need to be close to kids to settle them down, or whatever. I can't stand behind a podium and lecture in a teacher-directed kind of manner.

Carolyn's identity, as a person who enjoyed moving around and "being close to kids," shaped her *physical* approaches to literature instruction. She understood that her approach to teaching

literature involved far more than just reading certain texts or reading in a certain way. Each class setting shaped her approaches differently in subtle ways – in the ways she moved around the room, used her voice, and directed activities.

The Setting in Which Carolyn Taught Literature

Carolyn had taught for ten years at Johnson Fine Arts Magnet School, a small school in an urban area of a Georgia city. The year before, she had completed a doctorate in English Education in a progressive program that emphasized student-centered, response-based approaches to reading and diverse contemporary literature. She was back in the classroom after a year-long sabbatical.

Johnson was housed in a former elementary school two blocks from the main street in the downtown area. The school had outgrown the dilapidated two-story brick building, and Carolyn taught in one of several portable classrooms on the former playground in back of the main building. As a public fine arts magnet school, Johnson drew students from all the public schools in the county. Any student who wanted to attend Johnson could apply. The two requirements for entry were that a student participate in one or more of the fine arts offered and that their reading be close to grade level, as the school had no resources for a reading specialist. However, entry was also determined by race. The school district was under a federal desegregation order, and Johnson's student population reflected the population makeup of the county. About 45 percent of the students were African American, 53 percent were white, and about two percent were Asian American or Asian Indian American. Sixty percent of the students were on the federal free-lunch program. At the time of the study Carolyn taught three heterogeneous classes of ninth graders and one class of senior Advanced Placement.

How Carolyn's Literature Instruction Was Tied to Her Identity

Carolyn had grown up in an environment where reading and books were important to her everyday life. When her family moved down the street from her maternal grandmother and two aunts, Carolyn found a second home where books and stories permeated conversations:

> It's a heady, sort of sensual sort of memory because it was associated with warm summer nights and rocking chairs on the porch and people that I love. They always gave me cookies and milk as a snack, and hearing the stories, um, I was just mesmerized by them. Years later, when we read, for example, *Macbeth* in senior English, all of a sudden I knew what I had heard because I knew the lines by heart. They would read sections of wonderful pieces of literature. You know, things for children like *Hiawatha* and so forth but also passages from Shakespeare's plays and poetry.

Carolyn eventually earned bachelor's and master's degrees in English, and she tried several careers including newspaper reporting and teaching English at a community college. After a divorce, she decided to teach English in the public schools and went back to college to obtain certification. She began teaching at Johnson when she was in her early forties.

Carolyn admitted in our first interview that she was strongly drawn to "literature from the canon." Her early experiences with traditional literature convinced her that her students could have similar kinds of experiences. Her own experiences also shaped her purposes for teaching literature. She wanted students "to see the value of reading and find ways to read things and be interested in literature that might otherwise be difficult for them."

She found the innovative approaches she learned about in graduate courses helpful in making literature and literary analysis more appealing to adolescents: "The other thing that really influenced me in my course work was understanding the developmental processes of adolescents. I think that was a real shift for me because when I came back to teaching, I was doing something not in lieu of New Criticism but in addition to it." Theories on reader response and constructivist approaches provided her with new ways of thinking about teaching traditional literature: "If you could plug into the developmental levels of adolescents with something like *A Tale of Two Cities*, how could you do it?"

She also drew on what she learned in settings connected to her personal life to create an effective approach to literature. In a church lay ministry program, the instructor had focused on building relationships and on collaborative learning. She explained how these concepts, combined with what she learned in her graduate courses, influenced her teaching:

> That [the lay ministry training] combined with the focus of the study at the University on collaborative learning, um, I think those two things were definitely influential. . . . It's just a collaborative approach to critiquing writing. It's the writer's workshop. The focus of that is that it's peers helping peers and responding and giving advice. I use that not only with writing but with literature.

Thus various funds of knowledge from multiple settings and prior experiences informed Carolyn's literature instruction.

The Tensions for Carolyn in Teaching Literature

Carolyn's purpose for teaching literature took into account the racial and cultural differences among her students. She described one of her purposes in terms of enlarging their perspectives on language and diversity. She felt strongly that her role as an English teacher was to link literature to larger goals for students' future success in life:

> I'd like for them to really see the value of reading and find ways to read things and be interested in literature that might otherwise be difficult for them. I guess my goal is, I want them to love language. I also want them to love all kinds of language, different dialects, and to see the poetry of different dialects that are spoken, to have respect for each other's language, to maximize their opportunities to be successful at whatever they choose to do in life by being able to code switch. I think that all students, whether they are speaking a southern-white dialect or a black southern dialect or whatever the dialect may be, they need to have something that approaches the standard just so that they can open more doors for themselves in terms of whatever career or profession they choose. All of our students go to college so for them, I think that's something that I definitely want to encourage them to come away with, an appreciation for that.

How this purpose played out in a ninth-grade classroom was evident in a class discussion after the students saw the video *American Tongues*, a documentary that focuses on speech patterns in different regions of the United States and the prejudices attached to particular dialects. Following is an excerpt from a discussion the day after the students had seen it:

Carolyn:	Any other observations? Mary?
Mary:	Okay. I was kind of upset at first when they started talking about how if you're in the job situation. How you can't talk a certain way if you go into the corporate world. If I'm going to not get a job because of how I talk, you know what I'm saying?
Carolyn:	Yes.
Mary:	Man, if I'm qualified you better give me the job. Not because of the way I'm talking. You're not going to give me classes and make me sound different.

Carolyn: What is – what do you think. . .

S2: Sure enough.

S3: All right now.

S2: Sure enough.

Carolyn: Let's talk about that just a little bit more. What do you think the point is that they were making with that particular example? Remember the young woman from Brooklyn who said that she had not been able to advance in her career on account of her Brooklyn accent, and she was judged because of the way she spoke? What does that tell you about yourself? Is there anything in that that you think is a point that they are trying to make for you? [Pauses; scans the room for a response.] Mary just made a point, you know, about the fact that it may be quite the case that you don't get a job because of the way that you sound, and she expressed her frustration and anger about that being the case – if that is indeed true. [Calls on student with hand raised].

S3: Um, I don't remember who he was, but some man, he was making the point that, like, some people think, like, you know, when you get a job, they think, like, if you have a Southern accent, that you're not educated. [Students laugh.]

Carolyn: [Nodding] Yes. We stereotype people on the basis of the way that they sound, and we take the way a person speaks, a person's voice – and then judge their intelligence by that. Is that warranted? Is the video saying that there is a correlation between the way we talk and our intelligence?

The discussion concluded without any consensus, but Carolyn had brought this issue to the surface. Some of these ninth-graders were uncomfortable with confronting the idea that their home language could stigmatize them in the future. Her discussion of the video with these students affirmed her position on the importance of their learning standard language usage, but it also raised some obvious tensions for Carolyn and her students. She wanted them to "respect" different dialects, but she also wanted her students to be able to "code switch" to be successful in college and beyond.

Another tension for Carolyn was the lack of resources for developing a more diverse literature curriculum. She used an anthology organized by genre for the ninth-grade classes, a circumstance about which she had little choice. She explained, "I *don't* have that much liberty with my ninth graders because I'll have 67 to 70 students, and I can't ask those kids to all buy books." She wanted to introduce her students to diverse texts beyond the anthology; however she faced a number of

obstacles. The tensions that she faced in making decisions about literary texts for the ninth graders are evident in this interview excerpt:

> I try to do a dance, that of adding more challenging things than pieces that I think will be easier for them to read but that are still valuable, you know, for reasons of looking at other cultures and representing other cultures and those kinds of things. So, it's just really sort of a balancing act.

Part of that balancing involved meeting students' interests and developmental needs: "I'm going to try to pull in some more contemporary stories . . . and use them because I think the stories in the book are too child-like for these kids, and they will find more adult stories, I think, more interesting." However, more adult books meant parental objections: "Then we get into censorship."

Before teaching ninth graders, Carolyn had worked for a number of years with juniors and seniors. Trying to get ninth-graders engaged in reading challenging traditional texts created another source of tension for Carolyn. She had discovered that reading was not a priority for many ninth-graders:

> They will read the Cliff Notes. You'd think it [a text] would be something that everybody would read, and that's not always the case. I don't think it applies just when you are doing challenging 19th century or later pieces. I think it's just that kids have a lot more to do now than we did growing up and reading is not always at the top of the list.

However, she believed that ninth graders were capable of tackling questions about social justice, oppression, and cultural differences. She described a recent interdisciplinary unit on the Holocaust that she and a social studies teacher had created. Carolyn had used *Night* by Elie Wiesel to help students understand some of the darker themes that emerged from this story:

> One of the things that we had focused in on together was the process by which six million people could be put to death. We look at the process of desensitization, dehumanization, and finally persecution. And we talked about that in terms of the literature that we had read. We went back and looked at *A Tale of Two Cities.* We looked at the quarrel between the two families in *Romeo and Juliet*, and one question was to take that theme and talk about it personally and in connection with one of the pieces of literature we had read this year.

Carolyn found the outcome gratifying: "We were just stunned by the engagement of the overwhelming majority of the kids, not only in their response to the reading . . . but also by what

they put into and seemed to get out of the projects." Their level of engagement convinced Carolyn that introducing younger students to challenging texts could be done successfully, especially if she relied on student-centered approaches that encouraged connections with students' personal lives.

Some tensions existed for Carolyn as she sought to bring together various approaches to literature with the ninth graders. She explained that she pushed them to demonstrate expertise with analyses and traditional literature: "I gave them a poem, and I asked them to explicate it." However, she immediately said, "Okay, that is very traditional," but went on to offer evidence that a more traditional approach worked in conjunction with student choice: "We did that with passages throughout the entire year, and some students *choose* that. They felt comfortable doing that in fact." This statement provides some understanding of how Carolyn drew on various funds of knowledge as she reconstructed her practice following graduate work.

Throughout the year, Carolyn relied on a mix of traditional texts and teacher-centered approaches and more contemporary texts and student-centered approaches. This blending of approaches was evident in a class in April. The students were reading *The Odyssey*, and Carolyn began class by explaining how she would model good note-taking skills for them as they read through the text in class, a technique she said she had learned about in graduate courses:

> I'm going to stop you, and walk you through the kind of notes that I want you to be taking. . . . The other thing that I want to do as we go through and take notes here, is to help you organize your characteristics of the epic hero, and there's a system that we're going to use. . . . My suggestion for note taking skills is that you write "The Cyclops" in capital letters or something that will distinguish it as a category. That's the title of this particular episode that we're talking about. And then, as we go through that . . .you may just write "EH," and you know that stands for "epic hero."

As the students read, she followed through in helping these ninth-graders focus on and identify the characteristics of the epic hero:

Carolyn:	Let's just pause for a minute. Qualities again associated with Odysseus? What does that show about him?
S1:	He's strategic.
S2:	He thinks ahead about what's going to happen.
Carolyn:	Thinking ahead, yes. All those things, and especially thinking ahead. Because if he stabs the giant with his sword, what would their predicament be?
S3:	They'd be stuck in the cave.

She used modeling and scaffolding as approaches to reading *The Odyssey*, a good example of her adoption of developmental strategies for more challenging literature. Carolyn's classroom discourse also showed a blending of discourse styles. She tended to use a traditional initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) pattern of discourse (see Cazden, 1988). However, an analysis of the videotaped classes, such as the one above, showed that she combined IRE discourse with a lot of uptake, eye contact with students who were speaking, and movements toward speakers that indicated she was giving her full attention to them. She also helped them build on prior knowledge, as was evident in an earlier class that shared what they knew about Greece.

In reflecting on this class after watching the videotape, Carolyn explained that her teaching was fairly "typical" that day but was affected in specific ways by an unanticipated schedule change:

> One of the factors that influenced that, and I made a note here about it, was the fact that we had to go back to homeroom at the end of the day to hand out federal cards. That came on the intercom announced earlier in the class. I was very much aware of the fact that class was going to be shortened. That's a talkative group, and I knew that I was going to move quickly if I was going to get through what I was going to do.

She also talked about how the classroom setting itself affected her instructional approaches:

> I didn't put this in my notes, but I try to vary the pace of classes. Kids get tired of sitting in these horrible desks. I can't stand to sit in them myself for five minutes. I can imagine what it must be like to go around and sit in these old, discarded desks all day. I try to do something that enables them at some point during the class to get up and change position, even if it's toward the last ten minutes, when they're tired anyway. Then to get up and get into a group just for a few minutes before the bell rings; it gets them up and moving, to try to just vary what's going on in here. I'm dominating. In one of those tapes when the students were reading the poem . . . I was sort of directing, and calling on students and so forth when they raised their hands. But I try to vary what goes on.

She was aware that in the videotape she was "directing" and "dominating" this class but that she consciously adapted her instruction to a number of variables in the setting. On that particular day, she felt she needed to be more directive in response to a number of factors: a talkative group of students and a shortened schedule. She felt this class was less typical, and that she usually tried to vary her approaches out of a genuine empathy with students who were confined to uncomfortable desks.

The political tenor of the school and community settings was also a consideration for Carolyn, especially when she used texts outside the anthology: "When I do that I have to consider

censorship issues." In our interview after the text selection protocol, she talked about why she would not use a certain text as required reading: "I'm reticent to do it with the group. Remember, this is not only a conservative community, but it's a conservative school within a conservative community." The school setting, which promoted parent involvement, also invited close parental scrutiny: "We tend to have a lot of parents who care about what their kids read."

The school setting, with its strong focus on the fine arts, also created tensions for Carolyn's literature instruction. Her selection of certain literary texts might change because of a performance in the community. In response to the text-selection protocol, she talked about how a local performance had prompted her to use a text she did not want to teach: "I didn't want to do *Romeo and Juliet* when I did it this year, but I did it at that time because I found out . . . that the drama department at the college was going to put on *Romeo and Juliet*.

Teaching in a school setting that emphasized the fine arts also shaped her literature instruction in other ways. In our final interview, she described the tensions that emerged among maintaining a personal life, meeting the demands of school requirements, and teaching literature: "It's not so much the teaching literature that impacts what you do in the classroom, it's what else you have to do. I think that's often neglected factor, because you think that's not directly related to teaching literature." She explained how the expectations at Johnson shaped her instruction and her life:

> You add in all the performances that we're expected to come to at night, and you add in all the parental contacts. I mean, hardly a night goes by that I don't call at least one parent. All that added together gets very overwhelming at times. It definitely influences some of the things I do on a daily basis, and it influences choices that I make because of what the kids are doing as well. If the drama group is getting ready for a one-act competition, and if I've got a room of kids that are really into drama, then I've got to figure that into what they're going to be reading. These kids are down here until late at night, often, doing rehearsals, and practicing. You've got to consider all those factors.

In our initial interview in September, Carolyn had said, "I'm going to do as many things from the canon as I think that they [students] can go along with." In the final interview, she had not changed her mind. She explained how she reconciled her strong interest in traditional literature and approaches with response-based theories and approaches she had learned about in her graduate work:

> I've incorporated more response oriented, reader-response type of activity into what I do, and yet I'm basically still operating out of New Criticism. . . . So I think

> that is still probably my basic orientation, and yet I try to vary that and give students opportunities to just reflect on the literature, share their personal responses, whether they're really in the text, or just kind of rotate tangentially out of their reading, and give them an opportunity to make connections.

Although her graduate work had emphasized culturally diverse literature, and she believed it was important, she also valued familiar, traditional literature:

> R: In terms of selecting texts, do you think that you have changed at all in the way that you select texts from the beginning of your teaching career? Do you make decisions the same way now that made them at an earlier period?
>
> Carolyn: Basically, yes.
>
> R: OK.
>
> Carolyn: And I say that because I still cover what I consider some of the classics.

In explaining her position, she said, "I have to confess, I'm oriented toward the canon." But she quickly followed that with, "And then I use other things to supplement that gives different perspectives." However the conservative climate at Johnson, the lack of books other than anthologies, and a district ruling that forbade teachers to require students to buy books worked against Carolyn's interest in expanding her literature selections:

> I try to pull in pieces for exposure to different perspectives. Like, we do some things by African American writers, the Holocaust unit that we're going to do. That's why next year, I would like to pull in, possibly, the Gaines book and *Bless Me, Ultima*. You know, and perhaps *Shabanu* at some point. But, I'm just limited in terms of what I can do. I need to build a class set of something, so that at the very least, it's available for reading in class. Until I can do that, then I have to just deal with that situation.

Summary

Carolyn drew upon many funds of knowledge for her literature instruction – graduate study, home and school experiences with reading, and lay ministry study. These funds of knowledge intersected with the demands and expectations of the school with its emphasis on the fine arts and college preparation and community with its generally conservative views.

Much of Carolyn's literature instruction for her ninth graders relied on traditional texts from a genre-based anthology. However, a closer examination of her curriculum and why she used the texts and approaches she did showed that the label "traditional" did not describe her literature instruction adequately. Multiple tensions emerged as she grappled with old and new paradigms for teaching literature, concerns about her students' needs, and concerns about her personal live in the face of such "overwhelming" demands on her time outside school.

Carolyn's literature instruction reflected critical intersections among her identity, her knowledge of current literacy theories, and her purposes for teaching literature to racially diverse ninth graders in a fine arts magnet school. The school setting, with its emphasis on the talents of each student and on academic achievement, had an impact on Carolyn and her view of these students. Her literature curriculum was a "balancing act" that reflected multiple concerns: preparation for college, lack of funds for books, the need for more adult material, the threat of censorship in a conservative school and community, and structuring reading assignments in a school setting that made heavy demands on students' lives after school hours.

Discussion

The case studies of Claire and Carolyn illustrate the complexity of integrating theory and practice. Their literature instruction represented competing and often dissonant conversations among theory, identity, and practice. Their approaches to literature and their decisions about literary texts were shaped in part by the theoretical premises of the "new literacy" (Willinsky, 1990) that both had encountered in their graduate work. However they reconstructed those theories and their practices as they brought together funds of knowledge from multiple settings – their home lives, students' needs, collegial support, district-level decisions, and graduate study.

Their identities were particularly influential across several dimensions of their teaching – their roles as teachers, their interactions with students, their selections of literary texts, and their larger purposes and goals for literature instruction. Recent scholarship on identity describes it as something an individual constructs in a dialogue with various social and cultural settings: The individual is shaped by culturally defined roles and, in turn, the individual interacts with and shapes society (e.g., Baumeister, 1997; Bruner, 1990; Gee, 1996/1998). Identity is further defined

as society assigns roles to individuals as well as values attached to those roles (Baumeister, 1997; Gee, 1996/1998). When, for example, someone takes on the role of priest or teacher, society assigns both roles values and expectations for interactions with others as a part of that role.

Both Claire and Carolyn were intimately familiar with the traditional roles and "standards" (Gergen, 1982) the larger culture assigned to English teachers and their practices. More traditional paradigms and theories such as New Criticism focused on content and literary analysis rather than on readers or methods for teaching. Teachers, by implication, were responsible for telling students what they needed to know about a literary work (see Brooks & Warren, 1938). Carolyn and Claire were also familiar with the newer "standards" of constructivist approaches to literature where teachers are represented as facilitators in a student-centered model of learning. As Gergen (1982) and Goffman (1959) observed, identity and actions are constructed in response to culturally defined role identities in particular settings. However, as these teachers discovered, theory complicated those constructions. Both experienced tensions as they positioned themselves in relation to different conceptions of English teachers. Claire spoke of ongoing tensions about her role: either "that teacher person" or someone who is more "liberal" with students and allows autonomy and choice. She described the traditional standards for English teachers as a force that she had to consciously work against: "There's just something, that pull, that English teachers feel."

Carolyn experienced tension, too, as she tried to sort out very different roles and approaches to teaching literature. She valued parts of two different traditions in literary theory, and she reconstructed her practice as a blend of the two. She explained, "I think that was a real shift for me because when I came back to teaching, I was doing something not in lieu of New Criticism but in addition to it." In her compromise, canonical texts and a New Critical approach formed her "basic orientation," but she gave students "opportunities to just reflect on the literature, share their personal responses . . . or . . . to make personal responses."

Their identities also strongly shaped their sensitivities to and interactions with students. As Bruner (1990) noted, identity is "represented through the narratives that people use to describe their own actions and interactions with others" (p. 121). In reflecting on the videotapes of their classes, both Carolyn and Claire talked about their relationships with students. Claire noted how her interactions with students represented and affirmed her identity as a teacher, how comfortable she was with her students, and how much she enjoyed teaching and being with teenagers. Carolyn,

too, observed how her actions and interactions defined her identity as a teacher, walking around the room and being close to kids.

Their identities strongly affected their preferences for the literary texts they used with their students. Carolyn admitted her preference for canonical texts and Claire for contemporary "books with an edge." However, their decisions about texts were fraught with tensions that emerged from intersections among personal preference, students' developmental and academic needs, resources, and the larger expectations of the school and community. Carolyn talked about this process as a "dance" and a "balancing act." She chose texts for her ninth-grade students based on a variety of factors, some of which had the potential to provoke controversy: she wanted to "find more adult stories," but realized that could lead to parental objections.

Claire, too, dealt with tensions about what kinds of literary texts she should use with her juniors and seniors: "It used to be all contemporary, and then I said, 'Now that I have my own kids, I want them [students] to know classics, too.'" She had to weigh her preferences and what she wanted for her own children against both traditional and contemporary paradigms for the literature curriculum.

The identities of Carolyn and Claire also shaped the core of their larger goals and purposes for teaching literature. I use the word "core" to indicate a strong orientation or set of beliefs that seemed to function as a compass for each of them as they made decisions about texts and approaches. These core beliefs sprang from their own life experiences, especially experiences with literature. Claire recalled her own school literature experiences with anger: "I was into college a few years before I had my consciousness raised about women in literature, because I had read none. I mean, *no* women in high school. *Never*." Her experiences outside school with African American stories convinced her of the value of bringing other lives and cultures into the literature curriculum: wanting kids to know about "fuller lives, and backgrounds, other than their little ones in white bread suburbia."

Carolyn's early experiences with traditional literature were suffused with pleasant memories of family; school experiences just reinforced her love of canonical literature. Her larger goal for her ninth graders reflected her belief in creating approaches that would help them "see the value of reading and find ways to read things and be interested in literature that might otherwise be difficult for them." Like Claire, Carolyn's purpose for teaching literature also took into account the students' backgrounds, but her rationale differed in a racially diverse school setting. She wanted her

students "to love all kinds of language, different dialects, and to see the poetry of different dialects that are spoken, to have respect for each other's language." Her purpose was "to maximize their opportunities to be successful at whatever they choose to do in life" and through their school experiences to gain "something that approaches the standard just so that they can open more doors for themselves in terms of whatever career or profession they choose."

These teachers' purposes for teaching were, as illustrated above, closely tied to the settings in which they taught, and in turn, their classrooms reflected who they were. Their identities and theoretical allegiances spilled over into the physical settings of their classrooms. The physical arrangement of furniture and visual materials each displayed spoke of links between her purposes for teaching literature and her identity.

The differences between the school settings of Carolyn and Claire made clearer the impact of school and community on their literature instruction as well as some common themes. Both felt some tensions as a result of community and school orientations. Carolyn explained her stance on selecting texts by saying, "Remember, this is not only a conservative community, but it's a conservative school within a conservative community." Claire, too, felt similar pressures, and admitted that the community "does affect what I choose." Even though these pressures were of consequence to both teachers, each had developed strategies for dealing with them. Far more troubling to them were unresolved conflicts between their personal and professional lives.

As Carolyn noted the school setting itself – a fine arts school – created conflicts that not only affected her literature instruction but also the quality of her home life: "It's not so much the teaching literature that impacts what you do in the classroom, it's what else you have to do." She had to take into account her students' performance schedules, her expected attendance of student performances, and performances by community groups. For Claire the conflict centered on the demands of sustaining practices that she believed to be central to good literature instruction and preserving time for herself and her family.

Two powerful themes across these cases are worth noting. The first emerged from these teachers' efforts to sustain what they believed to be effective practices among competing theories and conflicting demands and expectations. They did this through a multi-dimensional reflective process that included inquiry that allowed situations to "talk back" (Schon, 1983) and articulations of a "theory of the unique" (Van Manen, 1990) to justify their positions and actions (Bruner, 1990).

They used funds of knowledge from a variety of settings to negotiate among conflicting theoretical premises and to articulate their practices in terms of particular students in particular settings.

This reflective process is evident when Claire talked about an incident in one of the videotaped classes when she puzzled through *Beloved* with her students:

> I think, again, that gives kids permission to *not* understand what's going on in the story. I really do. I say right here [reference to her notes on videotape], um, Lindy was like, "I don't get this. This is confusing." And I said, "This is good. You should be confused." I just think that's a normal place for readers and people who do real reading.

Claire is letting this situation "talk back" to her, and through this conversation with a situation, she articulates and justifies her theory on teaching literature. By implication, her use of "real reading" sets her theory and approach apart from forced academic readings where readers receive meanings constructed by others.

Carolyn also used this reflective process but in a different way. In a videotape of one class, she allowed a situation to talk back because she saw a discrepancy between what she usually did and what was happening: "I'm dominating. In one of those tapes when the students were reading the poem . . . I was sort of directing, and calling on students and so forth when they raised their hands." Then she offered a rationale for her actions: the shortened schedule and her feeling that she needed to push ahead. However her rationale was paired with an account of her usual approach where she tried to "vary what's going on." Her reference to "dominating" the class implied a comparison with the student-centered approach she sought to integrate into her practice.

A second theme emerged as these teachers entered into conversations with their practice: Both grounded theories on teaching and reading literature in the realities of their personal and professional lives. Bruner (1990) observed that "in most human interaction 'realities' are the results of prolonged and intricate processes of construction and negotiation deeply embedded in the culture" (p. 24). These teachers weighed theoretical possibilities against the particular yet complex "realities" of their schools, communities, and their own histories. In doing so, they drew on their identities and various funds of knowledge to construct what Schon (1983) described as a "system" of framing. Their framing of problems and developing strategies for addressing them represented "interpersonal theories of action" (Schon, p. 210) that encompassed identity, theory, and practice.

CONCLUSIONS

The case studies of Claire and Carolyn address some of the questions that researchers have raised about why gaps still appear to exist between theory and practice and why teachers move among theoretically conflicting paradigms. However, they raise other questions about the positioning of teachers in conversations about theory and practice in the teaching of literature. Willinsky (1990) concluded his treatise on the New Literacy by focusing on a solitary reader and expanding the view:

> The New Literacy challenges the separation of powers in literacy. It acts like a zoom lens which can focus on the reader sitting alone with a book . . . or it can broaden . . . until finally the depth of field brings into view the literary and social history of which this reader, not so alone with a book anymore, is unmistakably a part. (p. 239)

Willinsky rarely mentioned teachers except to suggest that they are responsible for transforming literacy in the classroom. Such representations imply that teachers' perceptions and voices are not an important part of the New Literacy. Not unlike the teacher in traditional representations of literature instruction, the New Literacy teacher remains a purveyor. The teacher, like the solitary reader, is nameless and solitary. The lens of research and theory on teaching English has yet to broaden its view to include teachers in any meaningful way. The perspectives of teachers, even those who have years of experience and advanced degrees, are rarely seen as central to the larger conversations about constructing meaningful experiences with literature. To imply that teachers largely resist theory without questioning the source of that resistance invites questions about power relations and the legitimacy of paradigms that ignore those who are supposed to orchestrate them on a daily basis.

At the core of these teachers' tensions about teaching literature were conflicts about theories on literature, lives of students and teachers, and demands of school settings. Recent studies of experienced English teachers who implement New Literacy practices (e.g., Allen, 1995; Rogers, 1997; O'Donnell-Allen & Smagorinsky, 1999) make clear the tensions and obstacles these teachers encountered. Claire and Carolyn also encountered significant difficulties and tensions as they made decisions about texts and approaches. The "whitebread community" in the suburban district where Claire taught and the racially diverse, fine arts school in a conservative community where Carolyn

taught influenced their literature instruction in powerful ways. However, both teachers brought years of experience and funds of knowledge to bear on specific problems. They made decisions about texts and approaches to teaching them based on particular students and situations. Their school settings and the needs of the students they taught pushed them toward what Van Manen (1990) called a "theory of the unique" (p. 150). Their "interpersonal theories of actions" (Schon, 1983) guided them toward framing practices in ways that were effective for them in terms of both the personal and professional dimensions of teaching literature.

Bringing these teachers' perspectives on teaching literature into the larger discussion on theory and practice offers opportunities for further understanding the relationships that are constructed in this intersection. The omission of teachers' voices in discussions of literary study, from the New Critics to Willinsky (1990), suggests the need for bridging this historic gap by examining the social and cultural constructions of these discourses. As Gee (1996/1998) cautioned, "We need to get *things* and *history* more deeply embedded into our account of meaning making" (p. 183). As these cases illustrate, examining teachers' understandings of theories on reading and teaching literature as embedded within the rich contexts of their lives and practices offers a broader view of the relationships between theory and practice and the "realities" (Bruner, 1990) that teachers negotiate with every decision they make. Their stories also illustrate less obvious power issues and ideological perspectives that permeate all paradigms to some degree, even those identified with the New Literacy. By definition, a paradigm is a model for action, and in the case of constructivist paradigms for literacy teaching, a model that is, ideally, inclusive and democratic. Yet when the goals for those actions ignore the realities and identities of those most affected by them, the model serves to constrain rather than to invite possibilities.

This study is limited by its focus on the particular, but that is also the strength of case study methodology. Interpretive case studies offer a deeper understanding of teachers' decisions, but selecting from large amounts of data to best represent teachers' perspectives is complex, and selections almost always reflect the researcher's own views as well those of the participants. Most case studies of teachers, including these, are limited because they focus on particular teachers at one point in time in a particular school setting. However this study, in spite of its limitations, offers insight into the lives of two English teachers and how their identities intersected with theory and practice.

I hope that inquiries such as this one will invite researchers and teacher educators to expand conversations on literature theory and instruction to include teachers' perspectives. Examining intersections among theory, identity, and practice seems essential if the primary enterprise of the New Literacy is to be truly inclusive and democratic.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your early experiences with reading and literature.
2. Tell me about how you decided to become an English teacher.
3. What do you remember about your preservice education courses? Your student teaching?
4. Tell me about your teaching career: How long have you taught? Where have you taught? What grade levels?
5. What are you teaching this coming year?
6. How do you decide what literature, in terms of titles or genres, you will teach? What criteria do you generally use?
7. How do administrators, parents, or the community influence your decisions about the literature that you teach?
8. What kinds of experiences have you had with parents who have questioned or objected to literature you were teaching? How did you handle them? How did these incidents affect your decisions about selecting literature?
9. What do you feel are some of the most effective strategies you've used in teaching literature?
10. How do you decide when a lesson, or a series of lessons, is effective?
11. In what ways do you think your teaching of literature has changed over your career? What prompted these changes?
12. When you are developing a plan for teaching a piece of literature, how do you usually proceed?
13. What kinds of strategies do you use in developing tests on literature?
14. How would you describe your major goals for your students in terms of the literature that you read and study?
15. What kinds of feedback from your students, in terms of reading literature, do you most care about?

APPENDIX B: LITERATURE SELECTION PROTOCOL

AUTHOR	TITLE	Would Select	Might Select	Would Not Select	Have Not Read
Achebe, Chinua	*Things Fall Apart*				
Anaya, Rudolpho	*Bless Me, Ultima*				
Angelou, Maya	*Maya Angelou, Poems*				
Angelou, Maya	*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*				
Austen, Jane	*Pride and Prejudice*				
Austen, Jane	*Sense and Sensibility*				
Bradbury, Ray	*Farenheit 451*				
Bronte, Charlotte	*Jane Eyre*				
Brown, Claude	*Manchild in the Promised Land*				
Camus, Albert	*The Stranger*				
Chute, Nevil	*On the Beach*				
Cooper, James Fenimore	*The Last of the Mohicans*				
Cooper, Susan	*The Dark is Rising*				
Cormier, Robert	*I Am the Cheese*				
Cormier, Robert	*The Chocolate War*				
Crutcher, Chris	*Chinese Handcuffs*				
Crutcher, Chris	*Stotan!*				
Dickens, Charles	*Great Expectations*				
Dillard, Annie	*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*				
Dorris, Michael	*A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*				
Eliot, George	*Silas Marner*				
Faulkner, William	*The Sound and The Fury*				
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	*The Great Gatsby*				
Frank, Anne	*The Diary of a Young Girl*				
Gaines, Ernest	*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*				
Gibbons, Kaye	*Ellen Foster*				
Golding, William	*Lord of the Flies*				
Greene, Bette	*Summer of My German Soldier*				
Guest, Judith	*Ordinary People*				
Haley, Alex	*Roots*				
Hansberry, Lorraine	*A Raisin in the Sun*				
Hawthorne, Nathaniel	*The Scarlet Letter*				
Heller, Joseph	*Catch - 22*				
Hemingway, Ernest	*The Old Man and the Sea*				
Hemingway, Ernest	*A Farewell to Arms*				
Hinton, S. E.	*The Outsiders*				
Homer	*The Odyssey*				
Hurston, Zora Neale	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*				
Ibsen, Henrik	*A Dollhouse*				
Ibsen, Henrik	*Hedda Gabler*				
Irving, John	*A Prayer For Owen Meany*				
Kingston, Maxine Hong	*China Men*				
Kingston, Maxine Hong	*The Woman Warrior*				

AUTHOR	TITLE	Would Select	Might Select	Would Not Select	Have Not Read
Knowles, John	*A Separate Peace*				
Lee, Harper	*To Kill a Mockingbird*				
London, Jack	*The Call of the Wild*				
Lowry, Lois	*The Giver*				
Mathabane, Mark	*Kaffir Boy*				
McKinley, Robin	*The Blue Sword*				
Morrison, Toni	*The Bluest Eye*				
Morrison, Toni	*Beloved*				
Myers, Walter Dean	*Fallen Angels*				
O'Brien, Robert	*Z For Zacharia*				
O'Brien, Tim	*The Things They Carried*				
Orwell, George	*Nineteen Eighty-Four*				
Paterson, Katherine	*Jacob Have I Loved*				
Paton, Alan	*Cry the Beloved Country*				
Paulsen, Gary	*Hatchet*				
Peck, Robert Newton	*A Day No Pigs Would Die*				
Potok, Chaim	*My Name is Asher Lev*				
Salinger, J.D.	*Catcher in the Rye*				
Shakespeare, William	*Hamlet*				
Shakespeare, William	*Macbeth*				
Shakespeare, William	*Othello*				
Shakespeare, William	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*				
Shakespeare, William	*The Taming of the Shrew*				
Shakespeare, William	*Romeo and Juliet*				
Shakespeare, William	*Julius Caesar*				
Sophocles	*Antigone*				
Staples, Suzanne Fisher	*Shabanu*				
Steinbeck, John	*Of Mice and Men*				
Steinbeck, John	*The Grapes of Wrath*				
Steinbeck, John	*Cannery Row*				
Tan, Amy	*The Joy Luck Club*				
Thoreau, Henry David	*Walden*				
Twain, Mark	*Huckleberry Finn*				
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr.	*Slaughterhouse Five*				
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr.	*Deadeye Dick*				
Walker, Alice	*The Color Purple*				
Warren, Robert Penn	*All the King's Men*				
Wharton, Edith	*Ethan Frome*				
Wiesel, Elie	*Night*				
Wilder, Thornton	*Our Town*				
Williams, Tennessee	*The Glass Menagerie*				
Yep, Laurence	*Dragon's Gate*				

AUTHOR	TITLE	Would Select	Might Select	Would Not Select	Have Not Read
SOURCES					
Beach & Marshall	*Teaching Literature in the Secondary Schools*				
Kutenplon & Olmstead	*Young Adult Fiction by African-American Writers*				
Hertz & Gallo	*From Hinton to Hamlet*				

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